





THE

JACKDAW OF RHEIMS.



He long lived the pride Of that country side,
And at last in the odour of sanctity died. *P.* 29.

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JACKDAW OF RHEIMS.

BY

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That little Jackdaw kept hopping about;
Here and there like a dog in a fair.

In sooth, a goodly company;

And they served the Lord Primate on bended knee.

Never, I ween,

Was a prouder seen,

Read of in books, or dreamt of in dreams,

Than the Cardinal Lord Archbishop of Rheims!

In and out

Through the motley rout,

That little Jackdaw kept hopping about ;

Here and there
Like a dog in a fair,
Over comfits and cates,
And dishes and plates,
Cowl and cope, and rochet and pall,
Mitre and crosier! he hopp'd upon all!
With saucy air,
He perch'd on the chair,
Where, in state, the great Lord Cardinal sat
In the great Lord Cardinal's great red hat;



The Jackdaw sat on the Cardinal's chair.

And he peer'd in the face
Of his Lordship's Grace,
With a satisfied look, as if he would say,
"We Two are the greatest folks here to-day!"
And the priests, with awe,
As such freaks they saw,
Said, "The Devil must be in that little Jackdaw!!"

The feast was over, the board was clear'd,
The flawns and the custards had all disappear'd,

And six little Singing-boys,—dear little souls
In nice clean faces, and nice white stoles,
Came in order due, Two by two
Marching that grand refectory through!
A nice little boy held a golden ewer,
Emboss'd and fill'd with water, as pure
As any that flows between Rheims and Namur
Which a nice little boy stood ready to catch
In a fine golden hand-basin made to match.



The friars are kneeling, and hunting and feeling
The carpet, the floor, and the walls, and the ceiling.

Two nice little boys, rather more grown,

Carried lavender-water, and eau-de-Cologne;

And a nice little boy had a nice cake of soap,

Worthy of washing the hands of the Pope.

One little boy more

A napkin bore,

Of the best white diaper, fringed with pink,

And a Cardinal's Hat mark'd in "permament ink."

The great Lord Cardinal turns at the sight

Of these nice little boys all dress'd in white :

From his finger he draws

His costly turquoise ;

And, not thinking at all about little Jackdaws,

Deposits it straight

By the side of his plate,

While the nice little boys on his Eminence wait ;

Till, when nobody's dreaming of any such thing,

That little Jackdaw hops off with the ring!

* * * * *

Slower and slower
He limp'd on before,
Till they came to the back of the belfry-door,
Where the first thing they saw,
Midst the sticks and the straw,
Was the RING, in the nest of that little Jackdaw!

Then the great Lord Cardinal call'd for his book,
And off that terrible curse he took;

The mute expression
Served in lieu of confession,
And, being thus coupled with full restitution,
The Jackdaw got plenary absolution !
—When those words were heard,
The poor little bird
Was so changed in a moment, 'twas really absurd,
He grew sleek, and fat ;
In addition to that,
A fresh crop of feathers came thick as a mat !



Where the first thing they saw, Midst the sticks and the straw,
Was the RING *in the nest of that little Jackdaw!*



Where the first thing they saw, Midst the sticks and the straw,
Was the RING *in the nest of that little Jackdaw!*

Or slumber'd in pray'r-time and happened to snore,

That good Jackdaw

Would give a great " Caw ! "

As much as to say, " Don't do so any more ! "

While many remark'd, as his manners they saw,

That they " never had known such a pious Jackdaw ! "

He long lived the pride

Of that country side,

And at last in the odour of sanctity died ;

When, as words were too faint



It's the custom, at Rome, new names to bestow,
So they canonised him by the name of Jem Crow!

His merits to paint,
The Conclave determined to make him a saint;
And on newly-made Saints and Popes, as you know,
It's the custom, at Rome, new names to bestow,
So they canonised him by the name of Jem Crow!

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